Remaking South Indian Śaivism: Greater Śaiva Advaita and the Legacy of the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita Vīraśaiva Tradition[1]

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Abstract Śaiva Advaita, or Śivādvaita, is typically regarded as an invention of the late sixteenth-century polymath Appayya Dīkṣita, who is said to have single-handedly revived Śrīkaṇṭha's commentary on the Brahmasūtra's from obscurity. And yet, the theological rapprochement between south Indian Śaivism and Advaita Vedānta philosophy has a much richer history, and one that left few south Indian Śaiva communities untouched by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The present essay is an attempt to trace the outlines of what we can call a "Greater Śaiva Advaita,"defined as the interpenetration of non-dualist Vedānta and a number of discrete south Indian Śaiva lineages, including the Śaiva Siddhānta in present-day Tamil Nadu (both Sanskritic and Tamil), the Sanskritic Vīraśaivas (writing in both Sanskrit and Kannada) based in heartlands of Vijayanagar, and the Brahminical Smārta Śaivas. I argue, specifically, that Appayya Dīkṣita did not coin the term "Śivādvaita" but drew on an entire discursive sphere known variously as Śivādvaita or Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita, a school of Vīraśaiva theology that provides a crucial missing link in the transmission of Śrīkaṇṭha's Śaiva Vedānta across regions and language communities in early modern south India.

Keywords Śaiva - Advaita Vedānta - Vīraśaiva - Hinduism - South India

By the fifteenth century, the Śaiva Age in south India had come and gone.[2] While in previous centuries Śaiva exegetes had found themselves in a position of cultural dominance, their successors felt compelled to adopt a more accommodationist strategy, reaching out to cutting-edge currents of Brahminical theology. Whereas previously Śaiva theologians had defined themselves by their acceptance of the Śaiva Āgamas as the highest scriptural authority, on the cusp of early modernity sectarian communities in south India—both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava—had come to structure their theology as a matter of course around competing interpretations of the Brahmasūtras. In other words, a community's stance on Vedāntic ontology—the nature of the world according to the Upaniṣads—became the philosophical foundation of intersectarian polemic. As a result, sectarian lineages that had previously dominated the religious landscape of south India were now compelled to speak in the language of Vedānta, and to affiliate themselves with a particular branch of Vedāntic exegesis.[3] That is, Śrīvaiṣṇavism, for instance, became increasingly synonymous with Viśiṣṭādvaita; to be a Mādhva, by and large, implied affiliation with Dvaita Vedānta. And over the course of the early modern centuries, Śaivas laid claim to the legacy of Śaṅkarācārya and his commentary on Brahmasūtras. In short, they made themselves the custodians of the non-dualist Advaita Vedānta.

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[2] The "Śaiva Age," as Alexis Sanderson (2009) has designated the medieval period (2009), reflects his argument that the period roughly between 500 and 1200 CE can be characterized by the dominance of tantric (Mantramārga) Śaivism as a model after which rival communities, including Vajrayāna Buddhism, began to fashion their soteriology and social organization. Sanderson's current publications argue for a superficial accommodation between Śaivism and Brahminical "orthodoxy": that is, while Brahminism was becoming increasingly irrelevant to Indian religion at large, it retained a veneer of legitimacy that required some sort of acknowledgment from anti-Brahminical theologians. In the post-Śaiva Age, however, Śaivism gradually came to be integrated within the framework of a larger Brahminical Hinduism. See Fisher (2013) for a discussion of how Śaiva sectarian traditions, in early modern south India, come to be classified under the umbrella of a larger "Hindu" orthodoxy. For instance, in the wake of the terrain-shifting debates of the Śaiva polymath Appayya Dīkṣita and his Mādhva Vaiṣṇava rivals Vyāsa Tīrtha and Vijayīndra Tīrtha, Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas across community lines began to produce an array of pamphlet-like disquisitions on issues of intersectarian importance, such as the relative authority of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, the role of esotericism in orthodox Hindu practice, and the necessity of wearing sectarian *tilakas* in public space to signal one's community of affiliation. One particularly intriguing

The result, succinctly, was an emerging synthetic tradition of sectarian Vedānta broadly classified as "Śaiva Advaita." By the seventeenth century, Advaita had so thoroughly permeated the philosophy and theological commitments of Śaivas across lineage boundaries that even India's most staunchly dualist Śaiva tradition, the Śaiva Siddhānta, had abandoned its prior

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tract of intersectarian polemic is the *Śivatattvarahasya* ("Secret of the Principle of Śiva") of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. Ostensibly a commentary on the Thousand and Eight Names of Śiva (*Śivāṣṭottarasahasranāmastotra*), the Śivatattvarahasya begins with a lengthy diatribe against Nīlakaṇṭha's Vaiṣṇava rivals who have attempted to discredit Śaiva Purāṇas as scripturally invalid on account of numerous corruptions, which suggest an unstable textual transmission. See also Fisher (2015) for further detail.

[3] Vedāntic exegesis, couched in the idiom of the classical Sanskrit knowledge systems, it must be noted, was not in and of itself designed to reach a popular audience, but did become the cornerstone of intersecterian debate on an intellectual level, which often played a key role in the relative patronage of rival sects in the Vijayanagar Empire and the subsequent Nāyaka kingdoms of south India. For further discussion and theorization on the relationship between theological discourse and the formation of wider religious publics, see Fisher (2013).

commitments in favor of a new theistic monism. Nevertheless, recent scholarship on Śaiva Advaita, of which there is admittedly very little, has yet to come to terms with its far-reaching impact on the south Indian religious landscape.[4] For instance, Lawrence McCrea's recent essay (2015), "Appayya Dīkṣita's Invention of Śrīkaṇṭha's Vedānta," describes this Śaiva-inflected Vedānta as the idiosyncratic invention of Appayya Dīkṣita, the great south Indian polymath of the sixteenth century. Śaiva Advaita, in McCrea's estimate, had garnered "no following, no respect, and indeed no intellectual standing at all in the intellectual world of sixteenth-century India," scarcely meriting the label of a "school" or "tradition" at all. To be sure, McCrea is right to characterize Appayya Dīkṣita as an iconoclast and an innovator. The place of pride he accords to Śrīkaṇṭha's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* was indeed, to a certain extent, a novel invention—although in truth, Śrīkaṇṭha was not entirely unknown among south Indian Śaivas.[5] And yet, a somewhat broader lens will allow us to contextualize Appayya's achievements, placing him in the company of both his intellectual forbearers and the broader cultural currents of the sixteenth-century Tamil country.

The present essay, then, is an attempt to trace the outlines of what we can call a "Greater Śaiva Advaita." As is implied, perhaps, by the compound itself,[6] Śaiva Advaita, in this expanded sense, can be defined as the interpenetration of non-dualist Vedānta and a number of discrete south Indian Śaiva lineages, including the Śaiva Siddhānta in present-day Tamil Nadu (both Sanskritic and Tamil), the Sanskritic Vīraśaivas based in heartlands of Vijayanagar, and the Brahminical Smārta Śaivas—including Appayya Dīkṣita—who were in the process of forging a multigenerational affiliation with the Śaṅkarācārya lineages of the far south. In the present volume, Michael Allen makes use of the term "Greater Advaita" to highlight the interpenetration of elite—that is, Sanskritic—Advaita with vernacular philosophical thought, narrative literature, and sectarian theological traditions. Much like Allen's "Greater Advaita," the Greater Śaiva Advaita of early modern south India (ca. 1400-1800) extends far beyond the boundaries of Śrīkaṇṭha's commentary on the Brahmasūtras. To put the matter another way, to be a Śaiva in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century south India had come to entail, in more cases than not, a belief that the absolute, non-dual *brahman* of Advaita Vedānta is none other than Śiva. Philosophically, then, Śaiva Advert often manifests as the exegetical and/or rational defense of the postulate that Śiva equals *brahman*, who is free from qualities (*nirviśeṣa*) and transformation (*nirvikārin*).

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[4] Such is the case with the recent work of Jonathan Duquette (2015a, 2015b). Duquette suggests that Śivādvaita, which he defines as the doctrinal position of Śrīkaṇṭha's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, remained unknown until the late sixteenth century, surfacing suddenly in the writings of Appayya Dīkṣita and his contemporaries, including Śivāgrayogin, and Vijayīndra Tīrtha (who writes in direct response to Appayya). As this article will demonstrate, Śivādvaita is indebted to an entirely different set of influences that serve as intermediaries between the Śrīkaṇṭha and Appayya. In light of this evidence, Duquette's tentative dating of Śrīkaṇṭha to the fifteenth century becomes highly implausible, particularly as the Kriyāsāra, a work of Vīraśaiva theology that directly cites Śrīkaṇṭha, is generally dated to the fourteenth century. In general, the conversation has moved very little forward from the citations provided by S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri in his *The Śivādvaita of Śrīkaṇṭha* (1930) and the introduction to his edition of Appayya's *Śivādviatanirṇaya*.

[5] See below for a discussion of the citation of Śrīkaṇṭha in the *Kriyāsāra* and its influence on the theology of Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita.

[6] The phrase Śaiva Advaita is decidedly, in Sanskritic parlance, a *karmadhāraya* rather than a *tatpuruṣa* compound: that which is at once Śaiva *and* Advaita, not simply the Advaita belonging to Śaivas, such as, for instance, Advaita Vedānta philosophy written under the auspices of the Śaiva Śaṅkarācārya lineages.

A trans-regional religious movement spanning multiple Śaiva traditions, Greater Śaiva Advaita is less a univocal philosophical school than an intellectual genealogy. Appayya Dīkṣita, for instance, as self-avowed spokesman for Śaiva Advaita, owes a great deal to the Śaiva Advaita that flourished beyond the Tamil country and outside of Smārta-Śaiva intellectual circles. In fact, as we shall see, Appayya Dīkṣita did not coin the term "Śivādvaita," but drew on an entire discursive sphere known variously as Śivādvaita or Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita, a Vīraśaiva theological tradition inspired in its earliest stages by a reading of Śrīkaṇṭha's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya. In brief, we can sketch the dissemination of the Greater Śaiva Advaita, for heuristic purposes, into the following chronological domains:

- Early Brahminical Śaivism in South India: Haradattācārya, ca. eleventh century.
- Early Śaiva Vedānta: The *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* of Śrīkaṇṭha, ca. thirteenth century.[7]
- Canonical Works of Vīraśaiva Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita: Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi of Reṇukācārya (Śivayogi Śivācārya); Śrīpati's *Śrīkarabhāṣya* on the Brahmasūtras; the Kriyāsāra of "Nīlkakaṇṭha Śivācārya), fourteenth century.
- The efflorescence of Śivādvaita literature in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada, fifteenth/sixteenth centuries.

To trace the contours of this genealogy, I begin with the earliest Śaiva theologians claimed as the progenitors of south Indian Śaiva Advaita—namely Haradatta and Śrīkaṇṭha—who constitute a prehistory of Appayya's Śaiva Advaita according to existing scholarly literature. I move then to the Sanskritic Vīraśaiva tradition, Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita, the non-dualism of Śiva as qualified by his Śakti—which, in the words of many of its commentators, was explicitly designated as "Śivādvaita," or Śaiva non-dualism. In other words, our first known appearance of the term "Śivādvaita," along with the systematic correlation of Śaiva sectarian theology with non-dualist Vedānta, must be attributed directly to the innovation of the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita tradition. Finally, I conclude with the broader efflorescence of Śaiva Advaita in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Tamil country, a movement whose most influential proponents included not only Appayya Dīkṣita himself but also prominent leaders of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta, including the multilingual theologian Śivāgrayogin (Tamil: Civākkirayōgikaḷ), a veritable boundary-crosser who reached out to Śaivas across communities in both Sanskrit and Tamil.

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[7] See Chintamani (1927) on the date of Śrīkaṇṭha.

That is, by the seventeenth century, Greater Śaiva Advaita had taken on a life of its own beyond paper or palm-leaf manuscript. Not only had classical Advaita Vedānta become Śaiva, but popular Śaivism in south India, across communities, had become Advaita.

What is Śaiva Advaita? The Vedānticization of South Indian Śaivism

In a recent article, Jonathan Duquette (2015b) interrogates the ambiguous doctrinal position of Appayya with the following question: "Is Śivādvaita a Siddhāntika School?" In previous centuries, Saiddhāntika theology may well have been regarded as mutually incommensurable with the increasingly popular Advaita Vedānta. By the sixteenth century, however, framing the question in this manner may lead to more confusion than clarity. The Śaiva Siddhānta, notably, had historically propounded a strictly dualist cosmology, asserting the immutable difference between Śiva and his creation, and between individual souls, or *jīva*s, who maintained their discrete identities even after liberation. Likewise, for Śaivas, it is the agency of the soul—its *kartṛtva*, that is its most essential defining feature—a stance utterly antithetical to Classical Advaita Vedānta. Saiddhāntika theology, then, logically speaking, would seem a rather poor fit with the non-dualist precepts of Advaita Vedānta philosophy. Nevertheless, by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Śaiddhāntika exegetes had so thoroughly assimilated the conventions of an Advaita-inflected theology that their treatises in both Sanskrit and Tamil—and even redactions of Saiddhāntika scriptures—were reimagined in the idiom of classical Vedānta.

One particularly striking example of this trend is the commentary of a certain Kumārasvāmin (circa fifteenth century) on the *Tattvaprakāśa* of Bhojadeva,[8] a succinct encapsulation on Śaiva Siddhānta theology. Unlike previous commentators, such as Aghoraśiva, who scrupulously adhere to the canon of Saiddhāntika doctrine, Kumārasvāmin repeatedly launches into extended digressions about the Vedic roots of the Śaiva Āgamas and Tantras, never hesitating to intersperse his discourses with references to Mīmāṃsā categories of ritual, even going so far as to assert that Śiva himself consists of the Vedas. Take, for instance, Kumārasvāmin's analysis of the first verse of the *Tattvaprakāśa*, a *maṅgala* verse in praise of Śiva. The verse in question reads:

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[8] The Bhojadeva who authored the *Tattvaprakāśa* has often been erroneously conflated with king Bhoja of Dhārā,

> The one mass of consciousness, pervasive, eternal, always liberated, powerful, tranquil—
> He, Śambhu, excels all, the one seed syllable of the world, who grants everyone his
> grace.[9]

Kumārasvāmin writes: "'He [Śiva] is victorious' means that he exists on a level above everything else. Why? Because his body, unlike other bodies, lacks the qualities of arising and destruction, and so forth. And that is because he consists of the Vedas, because the Vedas are eternal."[10] Having thoroughly accepted the Mīmāṃsaka principle of the *apauruṣeyatvam*—the authorless eternality—of Vedic scripture, Kumārasvāmin apparently felt it natural to equate Śiva, being similarly eternal, with the very substance of Vedic revelation.

To illustrate just how far Kumārasvāmin's exegetical agenda has wandered away from the mainstream of the Saiddhāntika exegetical tradition he inherited, we can contrast the tenor of his commentary with that of an earlier commentator, the twelfth-century theologian Aghoraśiva, one of the most celebrated theologians of the south Indian Śaiva Siddhānta, head of the southern branch of the Āmardaka Maṭha at Cidambaram.[11] Aghoraśiva, quite logically, approaches the

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author of the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* and other works.

[9] cidghana eko vyāpī nityaḥ satatoditaḥ prabhuḥ śāntaḥ / jayati jagadekabījaṃ sarvānugrāhakaḥ śambhuḥ //

[10] jayatīti / sarvasmād upari vartate ity arthaḥ / kutaḥ / asya vigrahasyottaravigrahavadutpattināśādyabhāvāt / tac ca vedamayatvād vedasya ca nityatvād iti /

[11] This Aghoraśiva is generally considered the same as the author of the *Mahotsavavidhi*, edited and translated by

Tattvaprakāśa as a primer on the foundational theological concepts of Śaiva Siddhānta, highlighting the disagreements of his own system with his philosophical rivals. And yet, in a Aghoraśiva elaborates on the very same verse in a remarkably different vein from Kumārasvāmin's commentary, unpacking with hairsplitting exactitude the theological significance of each of the verse's seemingly inconsequential adjectives. The prototypically Śaiva terminology that inflects his prose has been highlighted for emphasis below:

> Here, the teacher, for the sake of completing the work he has begun without obstacles, with this first verse in the Ārya meter, praises Paramaśiva, who is *without kalās, transcending all of the tattvas*, who is the efficient cause of the undertaking of the treatises of the Siddhānta: "The one mass of consciousness," etc. Here, by the word "consciousness," *the powers of knowledge and action* are intended. As it is stated in the *Śrīman Mṛgendra Āgama: "Consciousness consists of the [Goddesses] Dṛk and Kriyā."* The compound "a mass of consciousness" means he of whom the body is an aggregate of consciousness alone. It is not the case that he is inert, as held by those who believe Īśvara to consist of time, action, etc., because it would be impossible for something that is not conscious to undertake action without the support of something conscious. Nor is it reasonable that he is facilitated by a *body consisting of bindu*, because that would entail the consequence that he would not be the Lord, and, because he himself would then require another creator, one would arrive at an infinite regress with regard to his having another creator or having himself as a creator…
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> "Pervasive" means that he exists everywhere; he is not confined by a body, as the Jains and others believe, nor does he have the property of expansion and contraction, because such a one would necessarily be flawed with properties such as non-sentience and impermanence. "Eternal" means that he lacks any beginning or end; he is not momentary, as Buddhists and others believe, because, being destroyed at the very moment of his coming into existence, he could not possibly be the creator of the world. Now, if one says that the liberated souls as well have just such characteristics, he says *"Always liberated." He is eternally liberated; it is not that he, like the liberated souls, is liberated by the grace of another Lord*, because this would result in infinite regress…
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> "Grants everyone his grace": grace, here, is a subsidiary property to creation and the others. And thus, he bestows enjoyment and liberation to all souls by means of the *five acts: creation, preservation, destruction, concealment, and grace.*[12]

Richard Davis (2010), although Dominic Goodall has recently called into question whether the Mahotsavavidhi might be an interpolation in the *Kriyākramadyotikā*, Aghoraśiva's liturgical handbook that remains in common use across the Tamil country. For further information on Aghoraśiva, see Davis (1986-1992), and Goodall (2000).

[12] tatra tāvad ācāryaḥ prāripsitasya prakaraṇasyāvighnaparisamāptyarthaṃ sidhāntaśāstrapravṛttinimittaṃ

Here, Aghoraśiva adheres quite faithfully to the canonical theological models of the Śaiva Siddhānta, seizing the opportunity to compile the classic refutations of non-Śaiva explanations for the creation of the world. His proof texts, likewise, are drawn exclusively from the Śaiddhāntika Āgamas, such as the Mṛgendra Āgama and the Mataṅgapārameśvara. Throughout, his commentary is sprinkled with technical terminology that virtually never appears in non-Śaiva Brahminical theology, such as his reference to *dṛk* and *kriyā* as the two powers (*śakti*s) of Śiva, a stock trope that preceded the more familiar three-*śakti* model—*jñāna*, *icchā*, and *kriyā*.[13] Perhaps best known is the category of the five acts of Śiva—*sṛṣṭi* (creation), *sthiti* (preservation), *saṃhāra* (destruction), *tirobhāva* (concealment), and *anugraha* (grace)—the latter of which, the grace that uplifts individual souls from bondage, provides Aghoraśiva with the most natural—and certainly the historically correct—explanation for the term *sarvānugrāhaka* in the root text.

Kumārasvāmin, for his part, takes little interest in the obvious explanation for *sarvānugrāhaka*, preferring to import a model for how Śiva liberates individual souls that is

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sakalatattvātītaṃ niṣkalaṃ paramaśivamādyayā "ryayā stauti - cidghana iti / cicchabdenātra jñānakriye vakṣyete / tad uktaṃ śrīmanmṛgendre - caitanyaṃ dṛkkriyārūpam iti / cideva ghanaṃ deho yasya sa cidghanaḥ / na tu karmakālādīśvaravādinām iva jaḍaḥ, acetanasya cetanādhiṣṭhānaṃ vinā pravṛttyayogāt / na cāsya baindavaśarīrādyupagamo yuktaḥ, anīśvaratvaprasaṅgāt / tasya ca kartrantarāpekṣāyāṃ svakartṛkatve 'nyakartṛkatve vā 'navasthāprasaṅgācca ... vyāpī sarvagataḥ na tu kṣapaṇakādīnām iva śarīraparimitaḥ, saṅkocavikāsadharmī vā, tādṛśasyācetanatvānityatvādidoṣaprasaṅgāt / nityaḥ ādyantarahitaḥ / na tu bauddhādīnām iva kṣaṇikaḥ, utpattikāla eva naśyatas tasya jagatkartṛkatvāsaṃbhavāt / nanu muktātmāno 'py evaṃbhūtā evāta āha - satatoditaḥ / nityamuktaḥ / na tu muktātmāna iveśvarāntaraprasādamuktaḥ, anavasthāprasaṅgāt / ... sarvānugrāhakaḥ / anugrahaś cātropalakṣaṇaṃ sṛṣṭyāder api / ataś ca sṛṣṭisthitisaṃhāratirobhāvānugrahākhyaiḥ pañcabhiḥ kṛtyaiḥ sarveṣām ātmanāṃ bhogamokṣaprada ity arthaḥ

[13] On the transition from the dual *dṛk* and *kriyā śakti*s to the more familiar triad, see Brunner (1992). It may also be worth noting that such terms continue to appear frequently in sectarian theology across the Indian subcontinent during the early modern period, but denuded of their earlier Śaiva theological framework. For instance, the Gosvāmīs of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya import such vocabulary from the general pervasion of Śrīvidyā into trans-regional Śākta discourse, which in turn borrowed significantly from the conceptual vocabulary of the Pratyabhijñā school of Kashmir Śaivism.

entirely foreign to classical Śaiva theology, but suspiciously resembles the core theology of early modern Advaita Vedānta:

> For, unmediated (*aparokṣabhūta*) knowledge (*jñāna*), in fact, is the cause of supreme beatitude (*apavarga*). And its unmediated quality arises when the traces (*saṃskāra*) of ignorance (*avidyā*) have been concealed due to repeated intensive focus (*nididhyāsana*). And intensive meditation becomes possible when the knowledge of Śiva arises due to listening to scripture (*śravaṇa*) and contemplation (*manana*). And those arise due to the purification of the inner organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*). That [purification] occurs through the practice of daily (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) ritual observance, with the abandoning of the forbidden volitional (*kāmya*) rituals. Volitional scriptures, resulting in worldly fruits, such as "One who desires animals should sacrifice with Citrā sacrifice" (Taittirīya Saṃhitā 2.4.6.1), have come forth to cause Brahmins whose minds are preoccupied with worldly results to set forth on the Vedic path; those that result in heaven, [likewise, do so for] those who are eager for heaven; and scriptures such as the Śyena, which prescribe the procedure for ritual murder, to cause those who are eager to destroy their enemies to proceed on the Vedic path.
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> Thus, in sequence, through practicing daily and occasional rituals, from maintaining the sacred fires, from performing the Agnihotra oblation, and so forth, and through practicing those rituals that destroy sin such as the enjoined bathing procedure, when the purification of the mind becomes possible, when one turns away from volitional activity, when the purification of the inner organ arises due, which takes the form of he desire to know the self (*ātman*) through the practice of daily and occasional rituals, when the knowledge of Śiva has arisen due to listening to scripture and contemplation, after the destruction of ignorance and its traces through repeated practice at intensive meditation, when unmediated knowledge of the essence of Śiva arises, liberation (*mokṣa*) occurs. Such is stated in the Mokṣadharma and other scriptures: "Dharma is enjoined everywhere; heaven is the arising of its true fruit. The ritual practice of dharma, which has many doors, is indeed not fruitless here." In this passage, those who engage in ritual prescribed by Śruti and Smṛti, as enjoined by Maheśvara, are liberated; those who do not do so continue to transmigrate.[14]

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[14] tathā hi - jñānaṃ tāvad aparokṣabhūtam apavargakāraṇam / āparokṣyaṃ ca nididhyāsanenāvidyāsaṃskāratiraskāre saty udbhavati / nididhyāsanaṃ ca śravaṇamananābhyāṃ śivātmajñāne saṃjāte sambhavati / te cāntaḥkaraṇaśuddhitaḥ saṃjāyete / sā kāmyapratiṣiddhakarmaparihāreṇa nityanaimittikakarmānuṣṭhānād bhavati / … kāmanāśrutayaś caihikaphalāḥ citrayā yajeta paśukāmaḥ ityādaya aihikaphalaniviṣṭacittān viprān vaidikamārge pravartayituṃ pravṛttāḥ, svargaphalāś ca tadutsukāniti | ye ca śatrunāśotsukās tān vaidikamārge pravartayituṃ śyenā[ci?]rādyabhicārakarmavidhayaś ceti | tataś ca vihitasnānapāpakṣayakarmānuṣṭhānānvādhānāgnihotrādinā kramāt manaḥśuddhisambhave sati kāmanānivṛttau nityanaimittikakarmānuṣṭhānād ātmavividiṣārūpāntaḥkaraṇaśuddhyudbhave śravaṇamananābhyāṃ śivātmajñāne saṃjāte nididhyāsanābhyāsād avidyātatsaṃskārāpanayanāntaraṃ śivātmāparokṣye sati mokṣa iti / taduktaṃ mokṣadharmādau - sarvatra vihito dharmaḥ svargaḥ satyaphalodayaḥ / bahudvārasya dharmasya nehāsti viphalā kriyā / iti / atra ye maheśvaraniyukte śraute smārte vā karmaṇi pravartante, te mucyante; ye tu na pravartante, te saṃsaranti /

The textual register of Kumārasvāmin's commentary could scarcely be more directly opposed to that of his predecessor. The neo-Brahminical exegete not only imported the entirety of his philosophical apparatus from the most quintessentially orthodox of the Brahminical *darśanas*—namely, Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā—but effectively subordinated the goals of Śaiva religious practice to an Advaita Vedāntin soteriology. In place of the Saiddhāntika Āgamas, Kumārasvāmin quotes the Vedas, Upaniṣads and the Mahābhārata in support of his unconventional claims. Most strikingly, the knowledge of Śiva, for Kumārasvāmin, bears no relationship to Śaiva initiation, ritual practice, or to Śiva's grace-bestowing power, but arises strictly as a result of constant meditation on the truths of Upaniṣadic scripture, serving as the direct cause of liberation, here referred to as *mokṣa*. By equating Śiva himself with the very goal of Vedāntic contemplation, Kumārasvāmin overturned centuries worth of precedent of not merely indifference, but active hostility to the philosophical precepts of the Vedānta school of thought. Śaivas, in fact, had traditionally expressed a thoroughgoing disdain for the very term *mokṣa* for the Vedāntin assumptions it imported into discussions of liberation.

Such a sentiment was perhaps best captured by the lion's roar of Saiddhāntika theologians, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha II, in his provocatively titled *Paramokṣanirāsakārikāvṛtti*, "Commentary on the Stanzas on the Refutation of the Mokṣa Doctrines of Others."[15] In repudiating the Vedāntic concept of liberation, Rāmakaṇṭha launches a scathing attack on Maṇḍana Miśra and other Vedāntins of both the *vivartavāda* and *pariṇāmavāda* persuasion,[16] railing against the absurdity of a liberation that entails the dissolution of the individual soul. He invokes, in contrast, the classical doctrine of the Saiddhāntika Āgamas that situates a liberated soul as an eternally discrete conscious entity, permanently endowed with agency and unconditioned by either beginning or end. As he writes:

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[15] Translation by Alex Watson et. al., 2013. In this work, Rāmakaṇṭha II comments on the aphorisms of Sadyojyotis, Saiddhāntika theologian who was active circa 675-725 (Sanderson, 2006) For further details on Rāmakaṇṭha II as theologian see Goodall (1998). For Rāmakaṇṭha II as philosopher see Watson (2006).

[16] In his critique of Vedānta as such, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha II deliberately homologizes *vivartavāda* and *pariṇāmavāda* on the grounds that both maintain the emergence of the individual soul out of a supreme cause and its eventual dissolution upon liberation.

> All of these various disputants, being blinded by delusion, their eye of consciousness being afflicted by ignorance, have not seen the fruit termed liberation, known only through the teachings of the Lord, consisting in becoming equal to the true Supreme Lord. Therefore liberation of these kinds is [merely] imagined by them according to their fancies.[17]

In essence, for classical Śaiva Siddhānta from Sadyojyotis to Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha II, Vedāntic soteriology was by and large viewed as an antithesis of the path promoted by the Siddhānta.[18] And yet, the Vedānticization of Śaiva Siddhānta was not a unitary invention of post-sixteenth-century Tamil Nadu; rather, its history is best understood through the spread of Greater Śaiva Advaita from the early Śaiva Vedānta of Śrīkaṇṭha through its spread and transmission among the Sanskritic Vīraśaivas of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Śiva Qualified by Śakti: The Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita Tradition

If earlier Śaiva theologians such as Rāmakaṇṭha rejected the foundations of Vedāntic ontology, how did Śaivism and Advaita Vedānta come to be virtually synonymous by the seventeenth century? Beginning as early as the twelfth or thirteenth century, antagonism between Śaivism and Brahminism gradually gives way to an almost artificial syncretic fusion, as South Indian Śaiva theologians began to approach the Vedānta tradition not merely as a cogent analytical system, worthy of incorporation within the Śaiva fold, but as a fundamental cornerstone of Śaivism itself, including the Śaiva Siddhānta. Our earliest attested examples of a

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[17] PMNKV 2.17: tais tais mohāndhair avidyākrāntacinnayanaiḥ satyabhūtaparameśvarasamatālakṣaṇaṃ patiśāstraikagamyaṃ muktilakṣaṇaṃ phalaṃ na dṛṣṭam / atas tair evaṃvidhā muktiḥ svakalpanābhiḥ kalpiteti /

[18] See also Schwartz (2012) for Sadyojyotis's hostility toward Brahminical theology. As he observes, Rāmakaṇṭha's negative attitudes towards the Uttara Mīṁāmsā stand in contrast to his systematic appropriation of Pūrva Mīṁāmsaka attitudes and reading strategies in the service of rereading the Śaiva scriptures.

Vedānta-inflected Śaivism, the *Śrīkaṇṭhabhāṣya* and Haradatta's *Śrutisūktimālā*, have been claimed by twentieth century authors such as S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri (1930) as the progenitors of a Śaiva Advaita movement. Far from leaving no discernible following, these seminal works exerted a lasting influence on the Sanskritic Vīraśaivism,[19] which included communities that had gradually incorporated local lineages of Kāḷāmukhas and reformed Pāśupatas.[20] In turn, Śaiva Saiddhāntikas from both Tamil and Sanskrit lineages were increasingly swayed by the popularity of Advaita across the region, increasingly abandoning their commitment to a philosophical dualism. Subsequently, the Smārta Śaiva community of the Tamil country generated an enormous output of Advaita Vedānta speculation under the auspices of multiple sectarian lineages, including the Śaṅkarācāryas of Kanchipuram and Kumbakonam, proponents of a true Śaiva Advaita synthesis.

And yet, in the early centuries of this Śaiva-Brahminical alliance, theologians adapted philosophical apparatus of their argument not from Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta but rather directly from their Vaiṣṇava neighbors, the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of Vedānta as articulated by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava lineage. Indeed, a Viśiṣṭādvaita model, the "non-dualism of a *qualified brahman*,"[21] seems intuitively better equipped to handle the religious commitments of an embodied theism, the worship of a personal god, such as Śiva, venerated as possessing both physical attributes—with matted locks and crescent moon—as well as non-physical attributes such as lordliness (*aiśvarya*). From a philosophical standpoint, Śrīkaṇṭha's Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita commentary on the Brahmasūtras looks rather like Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya* in Śaiva clothes: while adopting the core of Rāmānuja's conceptual arguments, Śrīkaṇṭha tirelessly accumulates scriptural citations to demonstrate the supremacy of Śiva over Viṣṇu as supreme deity (McCrea 2015). Indeed, many passages from Śrīkaṇṭha's Bhāṣya offer close paraphrases of passages not from Rāmānuja's Śrībhāṣya but rather from his Vedāntasāra (Chintamani, 1927). Śrīkaṇṭha even designates his philosophical system by the name of "Śivaviśiṣṭādvaita"; although the term Viśiṣṭādvaita does not appear in Śrīvaiṣṇava writings prior to Sudarśana Sūri and Vedāntadeśika, Śrīkaṇṭha's language itself parallel's Rāmānuja's more closely than later commentators of his tradition.

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[19] The efflorescence of Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita philosophy is notoriously difficult to date, due in part to theologizing within the tradition that either exaggerates the antiquity of works or aims to discredit the Sanskrit-language theology of early Vijayangar-period Vīraśaivism as an inauthentic accretion to Basava's anti-Brahminical "Reformation." While this genre of theology undoubtedly postdates the earliest vacana literature, exact dates can be difficult to come by. Marulasiddaiah notes that a Śivatattvacintāmaṇi of Lakkana Daṇḍeśa can be definitively dated to the reign of Prauḍhadevarāya (1419-46), drawing as a result a generalized link between the promotion of Vīraśaiva theology and Vijayanagar rule, sponsored in particular by the early Wodeyars of Mysore and Umattur (1399-1640) and the Nāyakas of Keladi (1550-1763). Extensive manuscript research will be needed to establish the precise chronology of a number of the texts cited in this article, which will provide a foundation for a book manuscript on this subject.

[20] See, for instance, S. Settar (2000).

[21] In the Śrīvaiṣṇava Viśiṣṭādvaita tradition, the term viśiṣṭādvaita is not interpreted as a karmadhāraya, as per the common English translation "qualified non-dualism," but rather as a tatpuruṣa: "The non duality of a qualified being." (Okita, 2014). Likewise, the compound śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita should be interpreted as "The non-dualism of [Śiva] who is qualified by Śakti."

A near contemporary of Śrīkaṇṭha himself,[22] another of our earliest Śaiva Vedāntins, Haradatta, assents to a similar Viśiṣṭādvaitin model of Śiva in his *Śrutisūktimālā*, a garland of scripturally-inspired aphorisms that endorse the supremacy of Śiva, less as the absolute *brahman* than as an object of veneration for theistic Hinduism. For the majority of this work, Haradatta shows little interest in philosophical argumentation at all, leaving but a faint impression of a Viśiṣṭādvaita theology modeled from Rāmānuja's conceptual vocabulary. Take, for instance, the following verse, framed as an exegesis of the Ṛgveda Saṃhitāpāṭha of the Aśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtras (3.4):

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[22] Suryanarayana Sastri (1961) maintains that Haradatta Śivācārya flourished no later than the eleventh century. The commentator Śivaliṅgabhūpa or Śivaliṅgabhūpāla, he argues, is identical with a prince of the Kuṇḍavīḍu Reḍḍi dynasty, datable to between the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries. Appayya Dīkṣita is aware of Haradatta's work, citing him under the name Sudarśanācārya in his *Śivādvaitanirṇaya*. Contrary to Sastri, Appayya appears to believe that Haradatta postdated Śrīkaṇṭha. That Sastri is able to adduce a number of instances in which Haradatta and Śrīkaṇṭha adopt the same commentarial language—such as, for instance, the expression "saṃsāra rug drāvakaḥ" as a gloss of the word Rudra—suggest either that Śrīkaṇṭha drew directly on Haradatta or that the two inhabited the same interpretive tradition. Both are situated, according to popular legend, in the Andhra country, a proposition that could potentially shed light on the Vedicization of Śaivism under the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita Vīraśaiva tradition, which received ample patronage from the Reddy dynasty (1325-1448) of present-day Andhra Pradesh.

> "May homage be to that in which you abide":
> In such a manner, O Lord, everything is deserving of reverence
> Even the herbs that we honor according to tradition
> Through which, *as the embodied one does the body*, you superintend all beings.[23]

As Haradatta's commentator, Śivaliṅgabhūpāla elaborates, the embodied one (*dehin*) depicts *brahman*, or Śiva, as the in-dweller, the Lord who controls all beings from within (*antaryāmin*) while remaining ontologically distinct from individual souls themselves.[24] Allusions such as this, which provide coded reference to Rāmānuja's terms of art, indicate unambiguously that Haradatta, like Śrīkaṇṭha, is taking his cue from a Brahminical Śaivism informed by the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja and his followers. More interestingly, however, Haradatta actively cautions against what he perceives as Advaiticizing interpretations of scripture: Specifically, he attempts to disarm an Upaniṣadic contemplation favored by later Śaiva Advaitins in south India, namely, the *daharākāśavidyā*, or the meditation on Śiva in the void of the heart. The *locus classicus* for this contemplation is Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8,1.1: "Now, here in this fort of brahman there is a small lotus, a dwelling-place, and within it, a small space. In that space there is something—and that's what you should try to discover, that's what you should seek to perceive."[25] The scripture itself leaves much to the imagination, specifying little about the form or nature of the brahman that dwells within that space, much less what ought to be done about the implicit injunction—what exactly one should do to "perceive" brahman in the lotus of the heart.

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[23] Haradatta, *Śrutisūktimālā*, vs. 17: tasmai namo bhavatu yatra niṣīdasīti sarvam namasyam anayā tu diśā maheśa / apy oṣadhīḥ prati namo vayam āmanāmo dehīva deham adhitiṣṭhasi yena sarvam //

[24] With regard to this verse, Śivaliṅgabhūpāla writes "atra hetum āha dehīti dehī deham iva yena kāreṇa viśvam adhitiṣṭhasi antaryāmitayā viśvasmin vartase /"

[25] Olivelle, trans. atha yad idam asmin brahmapure daharaṃ puṇḍarīkaṃ veśma daharo 'sminn antarākāśaḥ / tasmin yad antas tad anveṣṭavyaṃ tad vāva vijijñāsitavyam iti /

Haradatta, for his part, expresses great interest in the *daharavidyā*, devoting several of his 151 verses to outlining the scriptural and mythological foundations of the practice. His fascination with its proper execution, however, while first of all gesturing toward the centrality of the Brahmavidyās in the practice of Vedāntic Śaivism, also happens to illuminate the place of non-dualism as such in the early centuries of greater Śaiva Advaita. Specifically, Haradatta and his commentators take pains to establish that Śiva, dwelling within the space of the heart, must be visualized in an anthropomorphic—in other words, qualified (*viśiṣṭa*)—form. The *nirguṇa* form of the meditation, however—the visualization of *brahman* on the crest of a flame in the heart—is at best understood purely as *arthavāda*, purely descriptive language meant to bolster the authority of the prescribed worship.

Haradatta writes:

That sentence, which prescribes your worship within the void
        Or which offers a particular form to it—
It should be visualized, knowers of the science of sentences maintain,
        Along with those statements that designate the qualities contained within.

That great fire said to be the cavity that is the heart of Nārāyaṇa
        And the crest of the flame said to be the supreme self,
All this is hyperbolic praise (*arthavāda*) of the procedure of worship,
        Enjoining the conduct of a man endowed with faith.

That "heart" which is specified with regard to Nārāyaṇa
        Ought to belong only to him, and not to others.
What is seen mentioned for to renunciants should be taken up only renunciants
        Regarding that worship of you enjoined [for all] in the prior section
        [on the daharavidyā][26]

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[26] *Śrutisūktimālā* vs. 36, 40, 41: vākyaṃ yad āha daharāntarupāsanaṃ te yad vā samarpayati rūpaviśeṣam asmai / antargatair api tadaupayikābhidhayair bhāvyaṃ vacobhir iti vākyavidāṃ pravādaḥ // nārāyaṇasya hṛdayaṃ suṣiraṃ mahāgnir agneḥ śikhā ca paramātmapadaṃ yad uktam / sarvo 'py upāsanavidher ayam arthavādaḥ śraddhāviśiṣṭapuruṣācaraṇād vidheye //

In essence, for Haradatta, the worship of an unqualified, non-dual *brahman* in the flame in the heart applies to Viṣṇu alone, figuring nowhere in the general (*sāmānya*) prescription for the practice of the *daharavidyā*. Advaita, strictly speaking, is nowhere to be found in the Vedānta of either Śrīkaṇṭha and Haradatta, whom the later tradition has claimed as the progenitors of the Tamil Śaiva Advaita. Granted, the *rapprochement* they undertake between Purāṇic Śaivism and the Vedic tradition—nothing less than the Upaniṣadic proof-texting of Śaiva theism—proved enormously influential on the later history of sectarian Śaivism in south India.[27] And yet, the derivative nature of their ontology—namely, its mirroring of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava Viśiṣṭādvaita raises questions about the continuity of Śaiva Advaita as a single theistic school of Vedānta. Did Śrīkaṇṭha's commentary exert any significant influence on the later tradition? To what extent are we justified in speaking of Greater Śaiva Advaita as a unified discourse?

As it happens, although we can safely maintain that Haradatta and Śrīkaṇṭha never intended to found a school of non-dual Śaiva Vedānta, their writings do seem to have inspired just such a movement, providing one of the foundational models for the Sanskritic Vīraśaiva lineages flourished in greater Karnataka. Most strikingly, Śrīkaṇṭha's legacy surfaces in a similar work of Śaiva Vedānta exegesis, the *Kriyāsāra* (ca. 1400) of anonymous authorship, composed at least a century after the *fluorit* of his predecessors. Itself styled as a Vīraśaiva commentary on the Brahmasūtras, prefaced by a versified *précis* of the author's principle arguments, the *Kriyāsāra* reads like a practical manual for applied Vedānta, commingling exegesis on Bādarāyaṇa's *sūtra*s with how-to instructions for executing meditations on the Brahmavidyās. And yet, while the formal elements of his work thus differ markedly from Śrīkaṇṭha's own commentary, the

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[27] For the later tradition of Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava sectarian debate, particularly as it hinges on creative exegesis of the Upaniṣads and the sectarian Purāṇas, see Fisher (2015).

Kriyāsāra attributes its inspiration directly to the *Bhāṣya* of Śrīkaṇṭha, whom the author, like others in his tradition, refers to as Nīlakaṇṭha Śivācārya.[28]

> Nīlakaṇṭha Śivācārya, by name, wrote the commentary,
> The supreme inculcation of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Siddhānta.
>
> I also composed its essential purport, to ease the
> Intellect of listeners, in the form of verses, in sequence.[29]

And again, later in the text:

> Laying down the meaning of the commentary of Nīlakaṇṭha Śivācārya,
> I will define the doctrine of scripture as the doctrine of the Vīraśaivas.[30]

Thus, while identifying his sectarian identity, first and foremost, as Vīraśaiva, the author of the Kriyāsāra describes his ontological interpretation of the Brahmasūtras as Viśiṣṭādvaita, seemingly mirroring Śrīkaṇṭha's appropriation of his Vaiṣṇava rivals. The fact that Śrīkaṇṭha, for his part, describes his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya as a work of Viśiṣṭādvaita is by now well known (McCrea 2015; Duquette 2015a, 2015b; Sastri 1930). The received scholarly wisdom, in fact, credits Appayya Dīkṣita himself, in his *Śivādvaitanirṇaya* ("Adjudication of Śivādvaita"), with recasting Śrīkaṇṭha's doctrine not as Śaiva *Viśiṣṭādvaita*—the non dualism of a *qualified* brahman—but Śaiva *Advaita*—that is, an argument for true non-difference between the individual soul and Śiva. On first glance, then, it appears that the *Kriyāsāra* has simply inherited his predecessor's Viśiṣṭādvaita ontology, mirroring Śrīkaṇṭha's insistence on simultaneous difference and non difference (*bhedābheda*) between Śiva and his devotee, a stance that

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[28] In fact, although the author clearly distinguishes himself from the author of the *Nīlakaṇṭhabhāṣya*, the few mentions of the *Kriyāsāra* in academic literature generally attribute its authorship, incorrectly, to one Nīlakaṇṭha Śivācārya. Careful scrutiny of the verses below will show that the author of the Kriyāsāra considers himself to have composed only a *kārikā* summary of the *Nīlakaṇṭhabhāṣya*, and not the *bhāṣya* itself.

[29] Vs. 0.32-33: nīlakaṇṭhaśivācāryanāmnā bhāṣyam acīkarat / viśiṣṭādvaitasiddhāntapratipādanam uttamam // mayāpi tasya tātparyaṃ śrotṝṇāṃ sukhabuddhaye / kārikārūpataḥ sarvaṃ krameṇaiva nibadhyate //

[30] Vs. 1.100: nīlakaṇṭhaśivācāryabhāṣyārtham anusandadhan / vīraśaivairabhimatam abhidhāsye śruter matam //

Haradatta as well, as we have seen, vehemently defends in his *Śrutisūktimālā* as entailed in the very project of a Śaiva-Vedānta synthesis.

And yet, the *Kriyāsāra* preserves a crucial innovation in the interpretation of the term *viśiṣṭa*, one that holds lasting implications for our understanding both of the history of Vīraśaiva theology as well as the transmission of Vedānticized Śaivism across the southern half of the Indian subcontinent. While the Viśiṣṭādvaitins of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition generally understand *brahman* as Puruṣottama, the supreme being, to be qualified by a delimited set of attributes—such as knowledge (*jñāna*), power (*bala*), lordship (*aiśvarya*), vitality (*vīrya*), potency (*śakti*), and splendor (*tejas*)—we meet with a rather different gloss of Viśiṣṭādvaita in the *Kriyāsāra*:

> Thus, in fact, they call it [the doctrine of *brahman*] *qualified by śakti*.
> Just as, regarding a cognition of a pot, "pot-hood" can be described as the qualifier,
>
> Likewise, one should ascertain the fact that brahman is *qualified by śakti*.
> Just as there is no intrinsic difference between a fire and its flames,
>
> Even though difference sometimes appears to exist, as with fire and a spark,
> Just like the coils of a snake—"difference and non-difference" are in fact like that.
>
> Therefore, the desire to know *brahman qualified by cicchakti*, along with knowledge of
> The six abodes, is clearly said to be the means of attaining liberation.[31]

The *Kriyāsāra*, as it turns out, is just one text from a bourgeoning scholastic enterprise—marrying Vīraśaiva theology with Vedānta exegesis—that scholars, largely within the cultural ambit of Karnataka, have referred to as Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita.[32] Over the course of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, Vīraśaiva theologians, facilitated by patronage both from the Reddy dynasty of Andhra Pradesh[33] and from the Vijayanagar Empire, undertook the project of tailoring the ontology of Śaiva Vedānta to their own doctrinal system, speaking in the idioms of both Sanskrit *śāstra* and Kannada didactic-devotional poetry.[34] Succinctly, for the Vīraśaivas of the Vijayanagar period, Viśiṣṭādvaita means *Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita*, the non-dualism of *brahman* qualified by *cicchakti*—without whom, *brahman* as Śiva cannot possibly exist (*avinābhāva*).

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[31] *Kriyāsāra*, 0.93-96: *iti* vyācakṣate śaktiviśiṣṭaṃ viṣayastviti / yathā ghaṭa iti jñāne ghaṭatvaṃ syād viśeṣaṇam // tathā brahmaṇi vaiśiṣṭyaṃ śakterityavadhāryatām / agnisphuliṅgayornāsti yathā bhedaḥ svarūpataḥ // agnitvena kaṇatvena bhedo 'pi sphurati kvacit / yathāhikuṇḍalamiti bhedābhedau tathātra ca // tasmāc chaktiviśiṣṭasya jijñāsā brahmaṇaḥ sphuṭam / ṣaṭsthalajñānam apy atra mokṣasādhanam ucyate //

[32] See, for instance, Candraśekhara Śivācārya (1996), and the introductory volume to Hayavadana Rao's edition of Śripati's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya.

C*icchakti*, the power of consciousness, while a relatively minor player in the cosmology of Śrīkaṇṭha, and more marginal still in Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita, is placed center stage by the Vīraśaiva theologians who inherit Śrīkaṇṭha's line of inquiry. In light of the *Kriyāsāra*'s invocation of Śrīkaṇṭha as intellectual forefather, it may well be the case that the Śaktiviśiṣṭa doctrine owes its name to one of a handful of uses of the compound by Śrīkaṇṭha himself, who writes, for instance, in his commentary on the Īkṣatyadhikaraṇa: "The object of the word *sat* is Parameśvara himself, having the form of cause and effect, *qualified by śakti*, who consists of the conscious and non-conscious universe, both gross and subtle."[35] And yet, by encompassing the possible qualifiers of *brahman* under the rubric of *cicchakti*, the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita tradition makes room for a theological as well as a philosophical break from Śrīkaṇṭha's Viśiṣṭādvaita, allowing for the incorporation of Śākta currents of Vīraśaiva theology within the framework of Vedānta while simultaneously reconciling apparent difference—the foundation of theistic devotion— with the true and absolute non-difference of *brahman*.

The term Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita, in fact, is not simply a label for sectarian identity, but a genuine conceptual innovation. While one of our earliest works of Vīraśaiva Vedānta, the

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[33] See Reddy (2014) for further details.

[34] On language politics and the "Sanskritic" tradition

[35] *Śrīkaṇṭhabhāṣya*, pg. 195. sthūlasūkṣmacidacitprapañcarūpaśaktiviśiṣṭaḥ parameśvara eva kāryakāraṇarūpaḥ satpadaviṣaya / The compound śaktiviśiṣṭa occurs in several other instances as well, but I have cited this phrase in light of Appayya's interpretation of Śrīkaṇṭha's argument, discussed below.

Śrīkarabhāṣya of Śrīpati, adopts an ontological model of "difference and non-difference" (*bhedābehda*), later Vīraśaiva exegetes—the author of the *Kriyāsāra* being no exception—shift the very terms of discourse to replace even Śrīkaṇṭha's Viśiṣṭādvaita with a radical non-dualism, articulated primarily through the cosmogonic function of *cicchakti*. Non-dualism as such, naturally is by no means foreign to the history of Śaiva thought, from the Parama Advaita of the early Kaulas to the Pratyabhijñā (Recognition) school of the Kashmiri Trika exegetes. The latter, in fact, is adopted quite widely among south Indian Śākta-Śaiva circles as the foundation for a Śaiva-Vedānta synthesis, in which *cicchakti* becomes the foundation for a Śaiva *pariṇāmavāda*—a model of internal transformation, in which *brahman* as *cicchakti*, the material cause of the universe, transforms herself into the diversity apparent in phenomenal experience while admitting of no genuine difference. While many advocates of Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita do endorse the *cicchakti pariṇāmavāda*, others marshal the concept of *cicchakti* to achieve an even closer reconciliation of Śākta-Śaiva theology with the strict Advaita of Śaṅkarācārya himself. Take, for instance, the ontology of Nijaguṇa Śivayogin, who in his *Paramānubhava Bodhe* rejects both *vivartavāda* and *pariṇāmavāda* in favor of a model he calls *sarvātmavāda*—the assertion that everything quite simply is the supreme self, and has never experienced differentiation. By asserting that the universe is fundamentally non-existent in all possible senses, he aims, instead, to rehabilitate the concept of *māyā* as the foundation for a non-dualism more radical than Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta.

In essence, the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita tradition, in most of its incarnation, leans far closer to a non-dualist Śaiva Vedānta than its name would lead one to believe. No better example of this can be found than the *Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi* (ca. fourteenth century),[36] reputed as one of the primary handbooks of Vīraśaiva theology. Its author, Śivayogi Śivācārya, follows faithfully in the path of his predecessors by emphasizing the inherence of Śakti in Śiva, equating her, as does Nijaguṇa Śivayogin, with māyā or *prakṛti* as the material cause of the universe. He proceeds in turn to sketch the contours of Vīraśaiva lineage and practice, beginning with Śiva's direct revelation to Reṇukācārya, followed by a *précis* of the six stages, the practice of bearing the *liṅga*, and the application of *bhasma* and the *tripuṇḍra*, the Śaiva sectarian emblem. He continues, then, to describe the cognition an initiate in Vīraśaivism ought to cultivate through service of his preceptor, a state he describes, succinctly, as "Śivādvaita," or unity with Śiva, equivalent in purport to the Upaniṣadic *mahāvākya* "*aham brahmo 'smi*," or "I am brahman":

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[36] Ben-Herut (2013) dates the Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi as early as the fourteenth century, which if accurate, establishes a

> Śiva alone is the supreme state, having the form of consciousness, bliss, and reality.
> He truly exists; the world, which is other than Him, has no permanence.
>
> Through the experience "I am Śiva," it is certain, when Śiva is made directly manifest,
> That he may become liberated from transmigration, through the severing of the knots of delusion.
>
> Experience the self as Śiva, do not think of anything other than Śiva!
> Thus, when non-duality with Śiva (*śivādvaita*) becomes steadfast, he will be liberated while living.[37]

We find, then, in the *Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi*, an intriguing mention of the term *Śivādvaita*—the same term later cooped by Appayya Dīkṣita as a doctrinal signifier—Śaiva non-dualism—in his reinvention of Śrīkaṇṭha's *Bhāṣya*. Indeed, while Śivayogi Śivācārya uses the phrase here to refer to a cognitive state, the awareness of oneness with Śiva, his commentator, Maritoṇṭadārya, has other ideas, adopting Śivādvaita to designate not merely a cognitive operation but as the very

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remarkably early date for the first known instance of the compound "Śivādvaita" in Vīraśaiva theology, predating Appayya Dīkṣita's "invention" of Śivādvaita by two hundred years.

[37] Śivayogi Śivācārya, *Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi*, 7.76, 78-9: śiva eva paraṃ tattvaṃ cidānandasadākṛtiḥ / sa yathāṛthas tadanyasya jagato nāsti nityatā // śivo 'ham iti bhāvena śive sākṣātkṛte sthiram / mukto bhavīta saṃsārān mohagranther vibhedataḥ // śivaṃ bhāvaya cātmānaṃ śivād anyaṃ na cintaya / evaṃ sthire śivādvaite jīvanmukto bhaviṣyasi //

name of a school of systematic theology, Śivādvaita Śāstra: "'He alone is Rudra, He is Īśāna, he is Bhagavān, he is Maheśvara, he is Mahādeva': thus, in the manner stated by the Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad, one should understand, according to the evidence (*pramāṇaiḥ*) of the Śivāḍvaita school (*śivādvaitaśāstra*) that he is only one."[38]

Was Śivādvaita in fact the name of a school of Vīraśaiva Vedānta, as Maritoṇṭadārya would have us believe? In fact, Sanskritic Vīraśaiva theology—whether written in Sanskrit or Kannada—fostered a surprising number of works whose titles were fashioned as compounds of the phrase Śivādvaita: *Śivādvaitadarpaṇa*, *Śivādvaitamañjari*, *Śivādvaitaparibhāṣā*, *Śivādvaitasudhākara*.[39] Viewed in historical context, the rapid proliferation of such a noteworthy phrase casts a new light on Appayya Dīkṣita's own contribution, the *Śivādvaitanirṇaya*. And discourse indeed, as much as established *siddhānta*, is what we meet with upon perusal of the textual evidence. Śivānubhava Śivācārya, for instance, author of the *Śivādvaitadarpaṇa*, undertakes a systematic translation of what he presents as preexisting doctrine, namely Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita. Throughout his argument, which like the majority of the genre is presented in high *śāstric* style, Śivānubhava intersperses his prose with choice scriptural quotations designed to manufacture a Vedic and Āgamic pedigree for the very compound *śivādvaita*: "This Śivādvaita is presented to him who desires liberation, discriminating, always endowed with right conduct, who has studied the Vedas, conquered his senses, and who follows the established eight shields (*aṣṭāvaraṇa*)."[40] By doing so, he argues that the doctrine logically entails the acceptance of a true non-dualism of Śiva, Śakti and the individual soul (*jīva*) under the name of Śivādvaita, an ontological reality that lies behind the entirety of Śaiva-Vaidika scripture, from the Epics and Purāṇas to the Saiddhāntika and Vīraśaiva Āgamas. He writes, in conclusion to his work:

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[38] Maritoṇṭadārya, commentary on *Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi* 1.7: 'sa eko rudraḥ sa īśānaḥ sa bhagavān sa maheśvaraḥ sa mahādevaḥ' ityatharvaśira-upaniṣaduktaprakāreṇaikameveti śivadvaitaśāstrapramāṇair avagantavyam /

[39] Mentioned by Śivānubhavaśivācārya in his *Śivādvaitadarpaṇa*, *caturtha pariccheda*, pg. 33, as the work of an unnamed teacher (*gurucaraṇaiḥ*). Other works produced by this same school, not titled with the distinctive Śivādvaita prefix, include Śivānubhava's *Śivānubhavasiddhānta*, and the *Śaktisandoha*, composed by Śivānubhava Śivācārya's teacher Śivāditya. I have not been able to trace either of these works at the present time.

[40] adhītavedāya jitendrayāya ca pratiṣṭhitāṣṭāvaraṇānusāriṇe / sadā sadācārayutāya dhīmate deyaṃ śivāḍvaitam idaṃ

> Therefore, it is entirely suitable that the Mahāvākyas [the "great statements" of the Upaniṣads], insofar as they are qualified by the well-known five conducts and the eight shields, and all Vedic scriptures, Āgamas, Smṛtis, Epics, and Purāṇas, should culminate in the very teachings of the Śivādvaita doctrine, synonymously referred to as Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita, which is the essence of the Divine Āgamas from the Kāmika to the Vātula that establish the sections on gnosis, ritual, yoga, and conduct, being the treasury of the essential unity (*sāmarasya*) of the divine (*liṅga*) with the soul (*aṅga*), consisting of the reflective full I-consciousness (*pūrṇāhaṃvimarśa*) that consists of the non-duality of the entire universe.[41]

Evidently, for Śivānubhava, Śivādvaita is in fact the name of a doctrinal school—and one that he attempts to attribute to his own lineage of preceptors at that—but one that appears, from an external standpoint, to originate from a liberal admixture of non-dual Vedānta with an almost ecumenical Śaivism, liberally incorporating terms of choice from not only Vīraśaiva theology but from the Pratyabhijñā school of Kashmir. Such a project is foregrounded even more explicitly in another treatise of the Śivādvaita school, the *Śivādvaitamañjari*. Its author, Svaprabhānanda, begins with a refutation, on purely Vedāntic grounds, of select non-Śaiva schools from Sāṅkhya to Yogācāra (*vijñānavāda*) Buddhism, building in turn to an extensive disquisition on the proper interpretation of Brahamsūtra 1.1.1—"*athāto brahmajijñāsā*"—only to arrive a provocative thesis: namely, that the Brahmasūtras and the Kashmiri Śivasūtras[42]—Śiva

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mumukṣave // Although I have not been able to trace the source of this verse, which Śivānubhava attributes to an unspecified Āgama, the doctrine is unmistakably Vīraśaiva, as is evidenced by the term *aṣṭāvaraṇa*, a term widely attested, for instance, in the *Śūnyasampādane* (See, for instance, Michael 1992).

[41] tasmāt samastaśrutyāgamasmṛtītihāsapurāṇaprasiddhāṣṭāvaraṇapañcācāraviśiṣṭatayā śeṣaviśvābhedamayapūrṇāhaṃvimarśanātmakaliṅgāṅgasamārasyarahasyapratipādake śivaśaktijīvetitripadārthasāmarasyanidhānabhūte jñānakriyāyogacaryāpadapratipādake kāmikādivātulāntāṣṭāviṃśatidivyāgamasārasve śaktiviśiṣṭādvaitāparavācake śivādvaitasiddhānta eva mahāvākyānāṃ samanvaya iti sarvaṃ samañjasam //

[42] Śivasūtras (ca. early ninth century), revealed to Vasugupta, figure among the earliest scripture of the Trika school of exegesis (commonly referred to as "Kashmir Śaivism"). See for further details Dyczkowski (1992a, 1992b). Interestingly enough, the Śivasūtras may have been more popular in Vīraśaiva theological circles than previously

and *brahman* being synonymous—are fundamentally univocal in their theological message. Śaivism and Vedānta, in other words, are one and the same:

> Thus being the case, because *brahman* consists of consciousness insofar as it has the essence of *dṛk* and *kriyā* [*śakti*], and because such has been aphorized by Śiva himself —"the self is consciousness"—because there is no contradiction between the Brahmasūtras and the Śivasūtras in that they arrive at a single meaning, one should understand that they share a systematic unity (*śāstraikyam*).[43]

And again, much like Śivānubhava, Svaprabhānanda concludes his treatise with a final gesture towards the hermeneutic unity of Vedānta and non-dual Śaivism across traditions:

> Thus, according to the stated sequence, one who understands the great mantra, the thirty six *tattva*s of *brahman*, the six stages (*ṣaṭsthala*), and the Brahmasūtras, which teach that consciousness consists of Dṛk and Kriyā *śakti*s as understood from the Śivasūtras, becomes immortal in this very lifetime while embodied.[44]

For Svaprabhānanda, then, Śaivism and Advaita, in essence, are functional equivalents; we find in his writings, in essence, a disquisition on the that very bipartite unity—"Śivādvaita"—that Appayya Dīkṣita investigates in his *Śivādvaitanirṇaya*. Indeed, the very title of Appayya's work lends credence to the postulation of a *Greater* Śaiva Advaita. That is, that Appayya himself did not invent the term Śivādvaita as the name of a new religious movement. Rather, Appayya appears to have cast his treatise as an authoritative adjudication (*nirṇaya*)[45] on a genuine conceptual problem with the existing literature: how can the inheritors of Śrīkaṇṭha's legacy—the Vīraśaiva commentarial tradition that remains nameless in Appayya's work—speak of their

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realized, as a commentary on the Śivasūtras was composed in Kannada by one Harihari Sharma in the seventeenth century.

[43] *Śivādvaitamañjari*, pg. 24: evaṃsthite brahmaṇas tāvat dṛkkriyāsvabhāvatvena cetanatvāt, "caitanyam ātmā" iti śivenāpi sūtritatvāt, brahmaśivasūtrayor ekārthaviśrāntatvena virodhābhāvāt śāstraikyam vimarśanīyam /

[44] Śivādvaitamañjari, pg. 36: evam uktakrameṇa śivasūtrasaṃpratipannadṛkkriyātmakacaitanyapratipādakabrahma-sūtraṣaṭsthalabrahmaṣaṭtriṃśattattvamahāmantraparijñānavān iha janmani asminnn eva dehe 'mṛto bhavati /

[45] On the use of the term *nirṇaya* in early modern Dharmaśāstra as a legal pronouncement on a vexing issue, arising specifically from the genre of the *nirṇayapatras*—let alone the voluminous Dharmaśāstra compendia such as the Nirṇayasindhu of Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa—see O'Hanlon (2010).

doctrine as simultaneously Śiva-*Advaita* and Śakti-*Viśiṣṭādvaita* without falling prey to philosophical incoherence? As Appayya himself frames his *Śivādvaitanirṇaya*:

> Śrīkaṇṭha Ācārya has described his doctrine as "Śivādvaita."
> We inquire here as to whether this is intended as Qualified or Non-Qualified.[46]

Has Śrīkaṇṭha truly described his doctrine as Śivādvaita? No scholarship to date has, to my knowledge, been able to point to an instance of the compound in Śrīkaṇṭha's Bhāṣya, nor to hazard a guess as to its provenance, besides Appayya's own creative genius. Nevertheless, as Appayya continues his adjudication (*nirṇaya*), highlights the very contradiction implied by the previous literature, drawing a direct contrast between Śivādvaita and Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita by foregrounding one of Śrīkaṇṭha's few uses of the phrase *śaktiviśiṣṭa*:

> "The referent of the word *sat*, having the form of cause and effect, is Parameśvara himself as qualified by Śakti, who consists of the universe both conscious and non-conscious, gross and subtle." Here, the word brahman is in the singular number. It does not have the capacity to denote both Śiva and Śakti individually, but rather its purpose is to indicate only Śiva as *qualified by Śakti*. Such is the case in the Nyāya Sūtra [2.2.68], "the meaning of a word is an individual, form, and class," in which the purpose of the singular number is not to individually denote individual, form, and class, signifying rather an individual that is qualified by form and class. [47][Likewise] the adjective [in the dual number], 'those two of whom the essence is the entire world,' by merely indicating that the words *sat* and *brahman* are *qualified by Śakti,* does not establish a qualified non-dualism.

Thus, in his usual erudite style, Appayya deliberately invokes the phrase *śaktiviśiṣṭa* to indicate that Śrīkaṇṭha's usage of the term "qualified" is not sufficient to imply a break from pure dualism—it does not, in other words, necessarily entail reference to Śiva and Śakti as ontologically separate entities. To claim such, in fact, would undermine Appayya's own attempt to resolve the apparent contradiction between Śivādvaita and Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita by way of a doctrine of transformation (*pariṇāmavāda*)—namely, the argument that the individual soul, and all of phenomenal realities, are internal transformations of *cicchakti*, who is herself non-different from Śiva. By Appayya's day, such a *cicchakti-pariṇāmavāda* was by no means an original contribution[48]; the proper ontological relationship between *cicchakti*, Śiva, and the universe—whether *pariṇāmavāda*, *avinābhāva*, or *sarvātmavāda*—was, as we have seen, an object of ongoing contestation among Vīraśaiva theologians of the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita school for quite some time. Although undoubtedly casting himself as innovator and iconoclast, Appayya's debt to his intellectual predecessors, while disguised in his own theological writings, is readily apparent in discursive context.[49]

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[46] *Śivādvaitanirṇaya*, v. 1: śrīkaṇṭhaśivācāryāḥ siddhāntaṃ nijagaduḥ śivādvaitam / tat kiṃ viśiṣṭam abhihitam aviśiṣṭaṃ veti cintayāmo //

[47] *Śivādvaitanirṇaya*, pg. 3: sthūlasūkṣmacidacitprapañcarūpaśaktiviśiṣṭaḥ parameśavara eva kāryakāraṇarūpaḥ satpadaviṣaya iti / atra brahmetyekavacanam— śaktiśivayoḥ pratyekaṃ na śakyatā, kiṃtu śaktiviśiṣṭaśiva eva— iti jñāpanārtham / yathā "vyaktyākṛtijātayaḥ padārthaḥ" iti nyāyasūtre— vyaktyākṛtijātīnāṃ tu na pratyekam, jātyākṛtiviśiṣṭavyaktirūpeṇa— iti jñāpanārtham ekavacanam / samastajagadātmakāv iti viśeṣaṇaṃ tu sadbrahmaśabdayoḥ śaktiviśiṣṭaśivavācakatvamātreṇa na viśiṣṭādvaitasiddhiḥ.

Beyond Appayya: Śaiva Advaita in Tamil and Sanskrit

When Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, one of the most influential Śaiva theologians of seventeenth-century south India, cites an authority on public Śaiva ritual, he turns to none other than the illustrious "feet of our grandfather," Appayya Dīkṣita himself, and his *Śivārcanacandrikā*, authoritative handbook on the daily worship of the Śaiva initiate.[50] On closer examination, however, Appayya's handbook is almost exclusively "borrowed" directly from the Kriyāsāra, despite the fact that Appayya claims to have personally recovered the Śrīkaṇṭha Bhāṣya fro obscurity, intentionally betraying no awareness of any predecessors to his project. Copying verbatim a the majority of the Kriyāsāra's ritual liturgy, Appayya neglects to import into the *Śivārcanacandrikā* any mention of the text's substantial commitments to Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita, material that later surfaces in Appayya's *Śivādvaitanirṇaya* and *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā*, passing for the author's own intellectual property. In short, it was not only his ritual manual that Appayya borrowed from the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita of the Kriyāsāra, but much of his philosophical agenda in revitalizing the Śivādvaita of Śrīkaṇṭha.

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[48] Both Suryanarayana Sastri (see introduction to Śivādvaitanirṇaya) and Duquette (2015b) seem to view the explanatory role of *cicchakti* as a distinctive strategy Appayya employs to read a pure non-dualism into Śrīkaṇṭha's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya. While the concept of *cicchakti*, naturally, has a long history in Śaiva theology, the immediate source of its philosophical significance to Appayya should be sought in the literature of Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita.

[49] Further textual evidence that Appayya's generation is deliberately borrowing from the Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita tradition can be found in an intriguing work of Appayya's near contemporary. One of south India's most prominent Advaitins, Nṛsiṃhāśramin, writes a commentary, the *Tattvadīpana*, on a work of a Vīraśaiva theologian, Mallanārādhya, alternately titled *Advaitaratna* or *Abhedaratna*, a rebuttal of Mādhva attacks on non-dualism. Further manuscript research is needed on the dynamics of intellectual exchange between Śaivas in the Karnataka, Andhra and Tamil regions, which I will be conducting in service of my next book project on this subject.

[50] Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, *Saubhāgyacandrātapa*: "Asmatpitāmahacaraṇair apy eṣa eva pakṣo likhitaḥ śivārcanacandrikā yām." See Fisher (2013) for further details. I am currently in the process of producing a critical edition of the unpublished manuscript of the *Saubhāgyacandrātapa*, a Śrīvidyā ritual manual.

Thus, while originally a product of the Vīraśaiva tradition, Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita, often otherwise known as Śivādvaita, provided a central vehicle for synthesizing of Śaivism with non-dualist Vedānta, leaving a lasting impact on Śaiva religious identity among Brahminical and Tamil Śaivas alike in the Tamil country. Indeed, by the late sixteenth century, in which previous scholarship has situated the primary efflorescence of Śivādvaita in the Tamil country, south Indian Śaivism had thoroughly assimilated itself to the demands of a non-dual Vedāntic exegesis. Like the majority of south Indian Śaivas of his generation, then, on a theological level, Appayya Dīkṣita found it quite natural to equate knowledge of Śiva with the central mysteries of Advaita Vedānta. In a particularly telling interlude, at the outset of his *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā*, his commentary on Śrīkaṇṭha's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, Appayya narrates Śrīkaṇṭha's fondness for the *daharākāśavidyā*, the Upaniṣadic meditation on the subtle void at the center of the heart, which, for Śaivas, had become the very dwelling place of Śiva himself. Seamlessly integrating Śaiva and Vaidika worldviews, Appayya aims to dispel all doubts in the minds of his readers that the *ātman*, or Self, revealed in the Upaniṣads is none other than Śiva himself:

> This Teacher is devoted to the *daharavidyā*. For precisely this reason, to give it form, he will repeatedly gloss the passage "the supreme Brahman, the divine law, the truth" throughout his commentary, due to his inordinate respect. And because he himself is particularly fond of the *daharavidyā*, he will explain in the Kāmādhikaraṇa that the

> *daharavidyā* is the highest among all the other *vidyā*s. Thus, he indicates the reference he intends to offer by the word "to the supreme Self," which indicates a qualified noun, referring specifically the *daharavidyā* as received in his own *śākhā*. For, it is revealed in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad: "In the middle of that crest is established the supreme Self."
>
> Some people, saying that the supreme Self is different from Śiva, delude others. As a result, with the intention that virtuous people might not be go astray, he qualifies [the supreme Self] as follows: "to Śiva." The Teacher will quite skillfully prove in the Śārīrādhikaraṇa that the supreme Self is, quite simply, Śiva himself.[51]

By the standard of classical Śaiva Siddhānta theology, the claim Appayya makes here is in fact quite radical: "The supreme Self is, quite simply, Śiva himself." His aim, apparently is to thoroughly harmonize an authentically Śaiva theology with the philosophical precepts not of qualified non-dualism, but of true Advaita Vedānta. That is, for a Śaiva Advaitin, like Appayya, all of reality must, ultimately, consist of the same essence, an essence that unites the individual soul, or *jīva*, directly with the supreme reality, *brahman*, alternately known by the name of Parameśvara.

Intriguingly, Appayya is by no means the only new theological voice to draw a direct connection between the Self and Śiva, overturning centuries of precedent in the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition. Among the Saiddhāntikas themselves, the most influential of these new theologians was Śivāgrayogin, a self-professed Śaiva Siddhāntika who aimed to reach across linguistic boundaries, shaping both the Sanskritic and the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta communities.[52] Śivāgrayogin, from what little biographical information we have at hand, was a preceptor of the

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[51] daharavidyāniṣṭho 'yam ācāryaḥ / ata eva tasyāṃ rūpasamarthakaṃ ṛtaṃ satyaṃ paraṃ brahmeti mantram iha bhāṣye punaḥ punar ādarātiśayād vyākhyāsyati / kāmādyadhikaraṇe ca svayaṃ daravidyāpriyatvāt sarvāsu paravidyāsu daharavidyotkṛṣṭeti vakṣyati / ataḥ svaśākhāmnātadaharavidyāyāṃ viśeṣyanirdeśakena padena svopāsyaṃ namaskāryam nirdiśati paramātmana iti / śrūyate hi taitirīyopaniṣadi—tasyāḥ śikhāyā madhye paramātmā vyavasthitaḥ / iti / kecana sa paramātmā śivād anya iti kathayantaḥ parān bhramayanti tadanuvartanena sādhavo mā bhramiṣur ity abhipretya viśinaṣṭi śivāyeti / daharavidyopāsyaḥ paramātmā śiva evety ācāryaḥ śārīrādhiraṇe nipuṇataram upapādayiṣyati / Appayya comments here on the verse: oṃ namo 'haṃpadārthāya lokānāṃ siddhihetave / saccidānandarūpāya śivāya paramātmane //

[52] For further detail on the Advaiticization of Tamil Śaiva theology, see the work of Eric Steinschneider in the present volume.

Sūryanārkoil Ādhīnam in Kumbakonam, a region-wide center of multiple monastic networks. Receiving initiation from the previous head of the lineage, Śrī Śivakkoḻundu Śivācārya, Śivāgrayogin replaced his guru as the head of the monastery, finding himself in a position of considerable theological influence over the Śaiva Siddhānta networks in south India. His most influential works included the Sanskrit *Śaivaparibhāṣā* and the Tamil *Civaneripirakāsam*, both of which set forth, for different language communities, the essential tenets of Śaiva Siddhānta theology. In both of these works, however, Śivāgrayogin shares a common theological agenda with Appayya, including Appayya's iconoclastic conviction that the individual self is, in essence, non-different from Śiva.

Śivāgrayogin's Advaita leanings are most evident in his extended discussion of the nature of *mokṣa* in his *Śaivaparibhāṣā* (and, simultaneously, in the Tamil *Civaneripirakāsam*). In fact, Śivāgrayogin quite largely echoes both the views as well as the idiom of Kumārasvāmin, who in commenting on the *Tattvaprakāśa* had adopted a thoroughly Advaiticized register of language. Unlike the classical Śaiddhāntika exegetes, who, again, were hostile to the very idea of *mokṣa* as understood by Vedāntins, Śivāgrayogin begins by defining *mokṣa*, the ultimate end, or *puruṣārtha*, as the attainment of Śivānanda, the bliss of Śiva. As he writes, succinctly: "Through identity with Śiva, the experience of the bliss of Śiva alone is *mokṣa,* because knowledge of one's non-difference with the supreme Śiva has been indicated in the Śrīmat Sarvajñānottara and other Āgamas as being the cause of *mokṣa.*"[53] Here, Śivāgrayogin cites a Śaiddhāntika Āgama, the Sarvajñānottara, in defense of strictly Advaita model of Śaivism. Although traditional Saiddhāntika Āgamas espoused a purely dualist cosmology, the Sarvajñānottara in particular seems to have undergone significant redaction during the early modern period;[54] as a result, the Sarvajñānottara became the principle scriptural resource for those Saiddhāntika theologians inclined to incorporate the fashionable Advaita Turn into their exegetical projects.

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[53] kiṃ ca śivaikībhāvena śivānandānubhava eva mokṣaḥ / tathaiva svasmin paramaśivābhedajñānasya mokṣahetutvena śrīmatsarvajñānottarādyāgameṣu bodhitatvāt /

Śivāgrayogin continues, then, in much the same vein as Kumārasvāmin. One attains *mokṣa*, quite simply, by the Vedāntic practice of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*, which in turn produce *sākṣātkāra*, or the direct experience of Śiva as *brahman*. By doing so, one becomes a *jīvanmukta*, liberated while alive, a concept fundamentally antithetical to classical Śaiva Siddhānta theology. Where Śivāgrayogin does in fact remember the tenets of an earlier Śaiva Siddhānta, he takes special care to distance himself from them. Such is, for instance Śivāgrayogin's assessment of Rāmakaṇṭha's traditional view—that the individual soul attains only equality with Śiva, but not identity with him—the belief that he becomes simply *another Śiva*. For Śivāgrayogin, the model of Śivasāmya, mere equality of Śiva, was espoused strictly by the Pāśupatas, Kāpālikas, and Mahāvratins—but not, he notes, by the Śaiva Siddhāntikas. By a process of radical inversion, Śaiva Siddhānta, for Śivāgrayogin, becomes very little other than Śaiva Advaita, while early Śaiva Siddhānta theology becomes the forgotten error of heterodox Śaiva sects.

What then, are we to make of this sudden interest in Vedānta in Śaiva circles, extending to both the Tamil Śaiva Śiddhānta and Sanskritic Śaiva lineages? Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Vedanticization of south Indian Śaivism coincided temporally even spatially with the institutionalization of the Śaṅkarācārya lineages of Sringeri and Kanchipuram and the subsequent propagation of Vedānta philosophy throughout the southern half of the subcontinent. In the Tamil South, we witness a direct alliance between the Śaiva Smārta Brahmins of the Tamil country and Śaṅkarācārya lineages from the vicinity of Kanchipuram and Kumbakonam, which had successfully taken root by the late sixteenth century. That is, during this very period, established lineages of Śaṅkarācārya Jagadgurus in the Tamil region come to occupy a prominent place in the Tamil religious landscape, prefiguring the present day Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha as well as the Upaniṣad Brahmendra lineage. Smārta-Śaiva intellectuals, for their part, began to forge personal devotional relationships with Śaṅkarācārya ascetics, a trend that soon became foundational to the emergent religious culture of south Indian Smārta Brahminism. In fact, by the seventeenth century, noteworthy Sanskrit poets and intellectuals who are not themselves renunciates in the Śaṅkarācārya order, in an unprecedented manner begin to refer directly to their personal relationships with Śaṅkarācārya preceptors.[55]

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[54] I thank Dominic Goodall for drawing my attention to the redaction of the Sarvajñānottara in favor of non-dualist theological influences.

In short, the social history of south Indian monasticism—whether Śaṅkarācārya, Vīraśaiva, or Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta—calls out for further research. And yet, the textual projects of these theologians speak to the admixture of Śaivism and Advaita that had become the norm in seventeenth-century south India. Appayya's own interest in the practice of Śaiva Advaita, for instance, speaks to an embodied Vedānta enacted beyond the boundaries of *śāstric* commentary. The *daharavidyā*, for instance—the contemplative worship (*upāsanā*) of Śiva within the void of the heart—appears to have become a mainstay of the popular Vedānta preached to a wider Śaiva audience by the Śaṅkarācārya preceptors of the Tamil region. Paramaśiva Brahmendra, for instance, authored an intriguing work known as the *Daharavidyāprakāśikā*, or "Illuminator of the Daharavidyā," which not only defends the centrality of the Daharavidyā in the Upaniṣads and Śaiva Purāṇas but provides a publicly circulating manual for its daily practice. Paramaśiva's own disciple Sadāśiva Brahmendra[56] distills the essence of Appayya Dīkṣita's *Siddhāntaleśa-saṃgraha*, and composes a devotional hymn entitled the *Śivamānasikāpūjā*. Evidently, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in south India, a lasting bond had formed between Śaivism and Advaita theology.

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[55] On the personal relationships between Smārta-Śaiva intellectuals and their Śaṅkarācārya preceptors, see Fisher (2012, 2013).

For the Śaivas of early modern south India, in short, Śiva himself had become none other than the *ātman*, or *brahman*, the highest truth of Vedic revelation. Śaivism, consequently—even the Śaiva Siddhānta—was for theologians none other than the epitome of Brahminical Hinduism, one of a number of sects that by necessity debated in the language of Vedānta philosophy. Unlike the Śaivism of the Śaiva Age, the Śaivism of Appayya Dīkṣita or Śivāgrayogin could no longer stand alone, outside the purview of a pre-established Hindu orthodoxy. Indeed, for early modern Śaivas, Śaivism constituted the whole, and indeed the very essence, of the Vedas themselves. The following aphorism, which circulated freely among Appayya's generation, encapsulates this contention:

> Among the disciplines of knowledge, Śruti is best; within Śruti, the Śrī Rudram
> Within that, the five-syllable *mantra*, and within that, the two syllables: *Śiva*.[57]

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[56] Sadāśiva Brahmendra also figures in the essay by Jason Schwartz in the present volume, for what purports to be an eyewitness account of the founding of Sadāśiva Brahmendra's monastery at Kumbakonam.

[57] vidyāsu śrutir utkṛṣṭā rudraikādaśinī śrutau / tatra pañcākṣarī tasyāṃ śiva ity akṣaradvayam // The Śrī Rudram, a hymn found in all recensions of the Yajur Veda, which had been central to the ritual practice of Śaivism long before the sixteenth century, is in fact the first textualized occurrence of the *pañcākṣarī* mantra: *oṃ namaḥ śivāya* . See also Gonda (1980).

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